

Please amend the above-identified application as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) An article having on at least a portion of its surface, a coating of a thin transition layer consisting of a metal bearing material and having a composition that varies from a an exterior first composition comprising a metal to a second composition beneath the exterior first composition, which transition layer is superimposed on a metal bearing color layer and is substantially transparent and colorless to visible light. ~~performs more than one function.~~

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The article of claim 2 1 in which one or more intermediate layers are interposed between the transition layer and the metal bearing color layer, said intermediate layer(s) being colorless, transparent, and less than 400 Å in thickness.

4. (original) The article of claim 1 in which the first composition is a non-precious refractory metal chosen from the group consisting of Ti, Zr or Hf, or an alloy thereof.

5. (original) The article of claim 1 in which the first composition is a noble metal chosen from the group consisting of gold, silver, platinum, platinum group metals, or an alloy thereof.

6. (original) The article of claim 1 in which the first composition is a corrosion resistant metal chosen from the group consisting of chromium or stainless steel, or an alloy thereof.

7. (currently amended) The article of claim 2 1 in which the metal bearing color layer has the same composition as the second composition in the transition layer.

8. (currently amended) The article of claim 2 1 in which the composition of the metal bearing color layer is chosen from one or more of Zr, Ti, Hf, C and N.

9. (currently amended) The article of claim 2 1 in which the first composition is zirconium metal and the second composition is chosen from one or more of Zr, Ti, Hf, C and N.